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Guardisman arrested in leak of classified military documents

By E. TUCKER, T. COPP and MICHAEL BALSAMO

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Massachusetts Air National Guard member was arrested Thursday in connection with the disclosure of highly classified military documents about the Ukraine war and other top national security issues, a breach that has raised questions about America's ability to safeguard its most sensitive secrets.

The guardsman, an IT specialist identified as 21-year-old Jack Teixeira, was taken into custody without incident after FBI officers converged at his Massachusetts home.

He is to be charged under the Espionage Act, which makes it a crime to remove or transmit classified national defense information, Attorney General Merrick Garland said.



Gen. Patrick Ryder speaks during a media briefing at the Pentagon, Thursday, April 13, 2023, in Washington.

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Associated Press

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Guardisman arrested in leak of classified military documents

Continued from Front

In his brief statement from the Justice Department podium, Garland did not reveal a possible motive, but accounts of those in the online private chat room where the documents were disclosed have depicted Teixeira as motivated more by bravado than ideology. Even as the investigation continues into the highest-profile intelligence leak in years, with sensitive information that was shared in the chat room ending up circulating around the world, the arrest is nonetheless a pivotal moment.

The emergence of Teixeira as a primary suspect is bound to raise questions about how such a profound breach, one that the Pentagon termed a “very serious risk to national security,” could have been caused by such a young, low-ranking service member. “We entrust our members with a lot of responsibility at a very early age. Think about a young combat platoon sergeant, and the responsibility and trust that we put into those individuals to lead troops into combat,” said Brig. Gen. Patrick Ryder, a Pentagon spokesman.

Teixeira’s specialty in the Air National Guard was as a “cyber transport systems specialist,” essentially an IT specialist responsible for



Attorney General Merrick Garland speaks at the Department of Justice in Washington, Thursday, April 13, 2023. FBI Deputy Director Paul Abbate, right, and Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco, left, listen. Pentagon spokesman U.S. Air Force Brig.

military communications networks, including their cabling and hubs.

In that role Teixeira would have had a higher level of security clearance because he would have also been tasked with responsibility for ensuring protection for the networks, a defense official told the Associated Press, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

Teixeira, who was wearing a T-shirt and shorts at the time heavily armed tactical agents took him into custody, is due to have his initial court appearance in Massachusetts on Friday. It was not immediately clear if Teixeira had a lawyer who could speak on his behalf, and a phone message left at a number believed to belong to his mother was not immediately returned.

The National Guard did not confirm his identity but said in a statement that, “We are aware of the investigation into the alleged role a Massachusetts Air National Guardsman may have played in the recent leak of highly-classified documents.” Ryder referred all questions about the investigation to the Justice Department.

The Biden administration has scrambled for days to contain the potential diplomatic and military fallout from the leaked information since they were first reported last week, moving to assure allies and assess the scope of damage. Pentagon officials have expressed alarm about the disclosures, but President Joe Biden, speaking to reporters in Ireland earlier Thursday, said “there’s

nothing contemporaneous that I’m aware of that is of great consequence.”

The classified documents — which have not been individually authenticated by U.S. officials — range from briefing slides mapping out Ukrainian military positions to assessments of international support for Ukraine and other sensitive topics, including under what circumstances Russian President Vladimir Putin might use nuclear weapons.

There’s no clear answer on how many documents were leaked. The Associated Press has viewed approximately 50 documents; some estimates put the total number in the hundreds. The leak is believed to have started on a site called Discord, a social media platform popular with people playing online games and where Teixeira is believed to have posted for years about guns, games and his favorite memes — and, according to some others chatting with him, closely guarded U.S. secrets.

In previous Associated Press stories, the leaker was identified as “the O.G.” by a member of an online chat group where Teixeira and others posted for years. The member of the chat group declined to give his name to the AP, citing concerns for his personal safety.

The chat group, called “Thug Shaker Central,”

drew roughly two dozen enthusiasts who talked about their favorite types of guns and also shared memes and jokes, some of them racist. The group also included a running discussion on wars that included talk of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

In that discussion, “the O.G.” would for months post material that he said was classified — originally typing it out with his own notations, then a few months ago switching to posting images of folded-up papers because he felt his writings weren’t being taken seriously, the person said. Discord has said it was cooperating with law enforcement.

There are only a few ways the classified information that was leaked could have been accessed. Typically in classified briefings like the slides that were placed on Discord, the information is shared electronically. That can happen either through secure computer terminals where users gain access based on their credentials or through tablets that are distributed for briefings and re-collected. If the slides need to be printed out instead, they can only be sent to secured printers that are able to handle classified documents — and that keep a digital record of everyone who has requested a printout. □



Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey speaks with reporters outside the Supreme Court on Capitol Hill in Washington, on Feb. 28, 2023.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Thursday allowed a roughly \$6

billion legal settlement to go forward that will cancel student loans for hundreds

Supreme Court won’t block \$6B student debt relief settlement

of thousands of borrowers who say they were misled by their schools. The justices did not comment in rejecting an emergency plea from Everglades College, Lincoln Educational Services Corp. and American National University. The schools had argued that they were unfairly included on a list of more than 150 institutions, most of them for-profit, linked with alleged misconduct. Lincoln and American are for-profit institutions; Everglades is a

not-for-profit. The justices’ action comes as the high court is weighing what to do with the Biden administration’s plan to wipe away \$400 billion in student debt held by more than 40 million people. A decision on that plan is expected by late June. The legal challenges have some similarities but the administration is relying on different laws in the two programs. The class-action settlement was approved late last year by U.S. District Judge William Alsup in

San Francisco in response to complaints that the 150-plus schools had made false recruiting claims and left many students unable to find jobs. The Justice Department has already begun implementing the agreement and said in court that roughly 3,800 borrowers who are part of the settlement attended the three schools.

Lower courts had previously denied the schools’ efforts to halt the settlement while they appeal. □

States confront medical debt that's bankrupting millions

By **JESSE BEDAYN**

Associated Press/Report for America

DENVER (AP) — Cindy Powers was driven into bankruptcy by 19 life-saving abdominal operations. Medical debt started stacking up for Lindsey Vance after she crashed her skateboard and had to get nine stitches in her chin. And for Misty Castaneda, open heart surgery for a disease she'd had since birth saddled her with \$200,000 in bills.

These are three of an estimated 100 million Americans who have amassed nearly \$200 billion in collective medical debt — almost the size of Greece's economy — according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

Now lawmakers in at least a dozen states and the U.S. Congress have pushed legislation to curtail the financial burden that's pushed many into untenable situations: forgoing needed care for fear of added debt, taking a second mortgage to pay for cancer treatment or slashing grocery budgets to keep up with payments.

Some of the bills would create medical debt relief programs or protect personal property from collections, while others would lower interest rates, keep medical debt from tanking credit



The gold dome of the Colorado State Capitol on March 23, 2023, in Denver.

scores or require greater transparency in the costs of care. In Colorado, House lawmakers approved a measure Wednesday that would lower the maximum interest rate for medical debt to 3%, require greater transparency in costs of treatment and prohibit debt collection during an appeals process.

If it became law, Colorado would join Arizona in having one of the lowest medical debt interest rates in the country. North Carolina lawmakers have also started mulling a 5% interest ceiling.

But there are opponents. Colorado Republican state Sen. Janice Rich said she worried that the proposal could "constrain hospitals' debt collecting ability and hurt their cash flow."

For patients, medical debt has become a leading cause of personal bankruptcy, with an estimated \$88 billion of that debt in collections nationwide, according to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Roughly 530,000 people reported falling into bankruptcy annually due partly to medical bills and time away from work, accord-

ing to a 2019 study from the American Journal of Public Health. Powers' family ended up owing \$250,000 for the 19 life-saving abdominal surgeries. They declared bankruptcy in 2009, then the bank foreclosed on their home.

"Only recently have we begun to pick up the pieces," said James Powers, Cindy's husband, during his February testimony in favor of Colorado's bill.

In Pennsylvania and Arizona, lawmakers are considering medical debt relief programs that would use state funds to help eradi-

cate debt for residents. A New Jersey proposal would use federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act to achieve the same end.

Bills in Florida and Massachusetts would protect some personal property — such as a car that is needed for work — from medical debt collections and force providers to be more transparent about costs. Florida's legislation received unanimous approval in House and Senate committees on its way to votes in both chambers.

In Colorado, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, Massachusetts and the U.S. Congress lawmakers are contemplating bills that would bar medical debt from being included on consumer reports, thereby protecting debtors' credit scores.

Castaneda, who was born with a congenital heart defect, found herself \$200,000 in debt when she was 23 and had to have surgery. The debt tanked her credit score and, she said, forced her to rely on her emotionally abusive husband's credit.

For over a decade Castaneda wanted out of the relationship, but everything they owned was in her husband's name, making it nearly impossible to break away. She finally divorced her husband in 2017. □

FAA says it has sent 250 cases of unruly passengers to FBI

By **DAVID KOENIG**

AP Airlines Writer

Federal officials said Thursday they have referred more than 250 unruly airline passengers to the FBI for possible criminal prosecution since late 2021, including one as recently as last month, when a man tried to stab a flight attendant with a broken-off spoon.

The pace of the criminal referrals is slowing, however. The Federal Aviation Administration identified 17 cases it has sent to the FBI in the first three months of this year — mostly for incidents that happened

last year but took time to investigate. Airlines have reported fewer cases of unruly passengers since last April, when a federal judge struck down a requirement that people wear masks on planes and public transportation. Before that ruling, about two-thirds of all incidents on planes involved disputes over masks.

"If you act out on a plane, you should just stay at home because we will come after you with serious consequences," acting FAA Administrator Billy Nolen said in a statement. "We have zero tolerance

for unruly behavior."

The FBI did not say how often it acts on the FAA referrals. Assistant Director Luis Quesada said the bureau is "committed to investigating all incidents that fall within FBI jurisdiction aboard commercial flights," but did not provide numbers.

The FAA announcement about came as lawmakers push legislation to create a new no-fly list for people convicted or fined for interfering with flight crews. A similar proposal backed by airline unions failed to gain ground last year in the face



People pass through Salt Lake City International Airport on Jan. 11, 2023, in Salt Lake City.

Associated Press

of opposition from conservatives and civil libertarians. The current FBI no-fly list is aimed at people suspected of terrorism ties.

The 17 cases that the FAA has referred this year in-

clude allegations of assaults against flight attendants and fellow passengers, attempts to open airplane exits during flights, and trying to break into the cockpit. □

Minneapolis to pay \$8.9M over Chauvin's actions before Floyd

By **JIM SALTER**
Associated Press

The city of Minneapolis agreed Thursday to pay nearly \$9 million to settle lawsuits filed by two people who said former police officer Derek Chauvin pressed his knee into their necks years before he used the same move to kill George Floyd.

John Pope Jr. will receive \$7.5 million and Zoya Code will receive \$1.375 million. The settlements were announced during a meeting of the Minneapolis City Council.

Both lawsuits stemmed from arrests in 2017 three years before Chauvin killed Floyd during an arrest captured on video that sparked protests worldwide, prompted a national reckoning on racial injustice and compelled a Minneapolis Police Department overhaul.

At a news conference Thursday, Mayor Jacob Frey apologized to all victims of Chauvin and said that if police supervisors "had done the right thing, George Floyd would not have been murdered."

"He should have been fired in 2017. He should have



In this image taken from video, former Minneapolis police Officer Derek Chauvin addresses the court at the Hennepin County Courthouse on June 25, 2021, in Minneapolis.

Associated Press

been held accountable in 2017," Frey told reporters. Both lawsuits named Chauvin and several other officers. The lawsuits alleged police misconduct, excessive force, and racism. Pope and Code are Black; Chauvin is white. They also said the city knew that Chauvin had a record of misconduct but didn't stop him. Criminal charges in both cases were eventu-

ally dropped, but Chauvin is in prison for Floyd's murder.

Bob Bennett, an attorney for Pope and Code, noted that other officers failed to intervene or report Chauvin, and police leaders allowed Chauvin to keep working even though they had video evidence from body cameras of his wrongdoing. He said the video is expected to be re-

leased soon.

"The easy thing is to blame Chauvin for everything," Bennett said in a written statement. "The important thing that the video shows is that none of those nine to a dozen officers at the scene ever reported it, ever tried to stop it. They violated their own policy and really any sense of humanity."

Police Chief Brian O'Hara said the department is

"forced to reckon once again with the deplorable acts of someone who has proven to be a national embarrassment." But he also cited "systemic failure" within the police department.

"I am appalled at the repetitive behavior of this coward and disgusted by the inaction and acceptance of that behavior by members of this department. Such conduct is a disgrace to the badge and an embarrassment to what is truly a very noble profession," O'Hara said in a statement.

Code, who has a history of homelessness and mental health problems, was arrested in June 2017 after she allegedly tried to strangle her mother with an extension cord. Pope was 14 in September 2017 when, according to his lawsuit, Chauvin subjected him to excessive force while responding to a domestic assault report.

City Council member Elliott Payne said he hoped the settlements "bring some closure to this era and is a stark reminder of the work we have lying ahead." □

Tech consultant arrested in killing of Cash App founder Lee

By **OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ and STEFANIE DAZIO**
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A self-proclaimed tech consultant was arrested Thursday in the stabbing death of Cash App founder Bob Lee last week in San Francisco, police said.

Nima Momeni, 38, was booked on suspicion of murder, San Francisco Police Chief Bill Scott said during a news conference. He was taken into custody Thursday morning in Emeryville, a San Francisco suburb.

San Francisco District Attorney Brooke Jenkins said Momeni will be charged with murder in Lee's death and is expected to be arraigned Friday. Prosecutors will ask a judge to hold him without bail.

Scott declined to give details on how they linked the death to Momeni or how the men knew each other. The chief also refused to disclose a possible motive for the killing.

Police found Lee with stab wounds in the Rincon Hill neighborhood of San Francisco at 2:30 a.m. April 4. He died at a hospital.

Investigators served search warrants in San Francisco

and Emeryville, but Scott would not say whether a weapon has been found.

Lee is known for creating the widely used mobile payment service Cash App while working as chief technology officer of the payment company Square, now known as Block. He was the chief product officer for the cryptocurrency firm MobileCoin at the time of his death.

"I acknowledge and understand how the loss of a young, vibrant leader and innovator has rocked our city and even beyond," Jenkins said.

On his LinkedIn profile, Momeni describes himself as an "IT Consultant/Entrepreneur" as well as the owner of a company called Expand IT.

It was not immediately

clear whether Momeni has an attorney who can speak on his behalf.

"I hope today's arrest can begin a process of healing and closure for all those touched by this tragedy," Matt Dorsey, another San Francisco supervisor, tweeted Thursday morning.

Prominent tech leaders took to social media to mourn Lee's death and blame San Francisco for what they call the city's lax attitude toward crime. Scott and Jenkins pushed back against that narrative on Thursday, with the prosecutor specifically naming tech billionaire Elon Musk for commenting on the case.

"This doesn't have to do with San Francisco, this has to do with human nature," Scott said. □



Flowers sit at a tree in front of the building where a technology executive was fatally stabbed outside of in San Francisco, Thursday, April 6, 2023.

Associated Press

Diplomat: Russia might discuss swap for jailed U.S. reporter

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia might be willing to discuss a potential prisoner swap with the U.S. involving jailed Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich after his trial on espionage charges, a top Russian diplomat said Thursday.

Gershkovich, 31, his employer and the U.S. government all deny he was involved in spying and have demanded his release.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told the state news agency Tass that talks about a possible exchange could take place through a dedicated channel that Russian and U.S. security agencies established for such purposes.

"We have a working channel that was used in the past to achieve concrete agreements, and these agreements were fulfilled," Ryabkov said, adding that there was no need for the involvement of any third country.

However, he emphasized that Moscow would only negotiate a possible prisoner exchange after a trial. "The issue of exchanging anyone could only be considered after a court delivers its verdict," he was quoted by Tass as saying.

That practice is in keeping with previous cases in which Russian authorities have insisted on complet-



In this handout photo released by The Federal Assembly of The Russian Federation, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov attends a session of the Federal Assembly in Moscow, Russia, Wednesday, April 12, 2023.

ing the judicial process before considering exchanges.

It's not clear how long the investigation could last, but other espionage cases have lasted for a year or more.

In December, American basketball star Brittney Griner was exchanged for Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout following her trial and conviction on drug possession charges. She had been sentenced to nine years in prison and ended up spending 10 months be-

hind bars.

Another American, Michigan corporate security executive Paul Whelan, has been imprisoned in Russia since December 2018 on espionage charges that his family and the U.S. government have called baseless. During the Griner case, the Kremlin repeatedly urged the United States to use the "special channel" to discuss it and work on a potential prisoner swap, saying such private communications were the only appropriate means for res-

olution, rather than public statements and speculation.

Gershkovich could face up to 20 years in prison if convicted. Russian lawyers have said past investigations into espionage cases took a year to 18 months, during which time he could have little contact with the outside world.

A Moscow court has received a defense appeal of his arrest and it's scheduled to be considered April 18.

Speaking at a panel discus-

sion on the case Wednesday at Columbia University in New York, the newspaper's chief news editor, Elena Cherney, said the Journal's lawyers had visited Gershkovich three times, that he appears to be in good spirits and health, and that he had received updates on one of his favorite soccer teams, Arsenal.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, this month to immediately secure the release of both Gershkovich and Whelan.

President Joe Biden spoke to Gershkovich's parents Tuesday and again condemned his detention. "We're making it real clear that it's totally illegal what's happening, and we declared it so," he said.

On Monday, the U.S. government declared Gershkovich as "wrongfully detained," a designation that means that a particular State Department office takes the lead on seeking his release.

Russia's Federal Security Service, or FSB, arrested Gershkovich in Yekaterinburg, Russia's fourth-largest city, on March 29. He is the first U.S. correspondent since the Cold War to be detained in Russia for alleged spying. □

Associated Press

Northern China blanketed with floating sand and dust

BEIJING (AP) — Many areas in northern China were blanketed with floating sand and dust on Thursday, and a sandstorm was expected to sweep through parts of Inner Mongolia.

The sandy, dusty weather and strong winds will last until Sunday, the National Meteorological Center said in a statement, adding the public should take precautionary measures to guard against poor air quality.

It renewed a blue alert for sandstorms — the least severe warning in the country's four-tier weather warning system — and forecast that more than a dozen

regions, including major cities like Beijing and Shanghai, would see some areas

affected by floating sand and dust on Thursday.

The center's chief fore-



Cars drive along an expressway during a dust and sandstorm in Beijing, Thursday, April 13, 2023.

Associated Press

caster, Gui Hailin, earlier said the sandy and dusty weather began Sunday in southern Mongolia. As cold air moved southward, the weather spread to various regions including northern and northeast China, he said.

In Beijing, buildings and traffic were shrouded by low visibility. The IQAir website showed an air quality index of 540 for the capital and labeled its air pollution level as "hazardous."

The Beijing Municipal Ecological and Environmental Monitoring Center issued the highest air pollution warning.

Running enthusiast Tu Jiaxian said the sandstorm had a "huge impact" on her life because it interrupted her marathon training plans.

"I want to run but I dare not run because of the weather. That is very painful," Tu said, adding she had quit her daily 10-kilometer (6.2-mile) jogs for three days this week due to the weather.

Cao Yuanyuan, a newcomer to Beijing, was surprised at first to see the hazy scenes and took photos of them. But the bad weather forced her to wear glasses as a protective measure and keep the windows in her room shut. □

Drought will cause crop failures in Spain, farmers warn

By **JENNIFER O'MAHONY**
and **JOSEPH WILSON**
Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Drought now affects 60% of the Spanish countryside, with crops like wheat and barley likely to fail entirely in four regions, the main Spanish farmers' association said on Thursday.

Spain's long-term drought is causing "irreversible losses" to more than 3.5 million hectares of crops, the Coordinator of Farmers' and Ranchers' Organizations (COAG in its Spanish acronym) said in a new report. Some cereals need to be "written off" in the prime growing regions of Andalusia, Castilla La Mancha, Extremadura and Murcia, and are likely to be lost in the driest areas of three other regions, according to the report. In the wine-growing region of La Rioja, farmers were in the exceptional situation of "having to irrigate cereals ... when normally they are never watered," the association said.

Nuts and vineyards are also struggling, and olives will be badly affected if rain does not arrive in the next few weeks, the report stated. The lack of available water was further impacting



View of the dry Sau reservoir about 100 km (62 miles) north of Barcelona. Spain, March 20, 2023.
Associated Press

the ability of farmers to irrigate corn, sunflowers, rice and cotton, likely leading to reduced sowing of these crops over the summer, it added.

Three years of very low rainfall and high temperatures have put Spain officially into long-term drought, the country's weather agency said last month. Last year was Spain's sixth driest and the hottest since records began in 1961.

Spain's agriculture ministry has called a meeting with farming representatives on

Wednesday to discuss the crisis. COAG will plead for immediate financial relief, it said.

"This has been the most expensive planting season on record, and with harvests ruined or reduced by 60-80%, there will be many farms that will have a very tough time surviving if they don't receive an injection of capital," said Javier Fatas, head of water and the environment for the association.

In addition to crop failures, ranchers will struggle to

feed cattle due to dried-up pasture, the farmers' association further warned. This will also be the third consecutive season without honey for beekeepers, as bees lack vegetation and flowers to feed from in the mountains due to a shortage of water.

Reservoirs in Andalusia, Spain's most important food-exporting region, have water levels of 30%. The regional capital, Seville, may face drinking water restrictions by the summer if not enough rain falls.

In the northeastern Catalonia region, average reservoir levels are hovering around 27% of their capacity.

There are restrictions on agricultural and industrial water use, and it is forbidden to use drinking water for washing cars or filling swimming pools.

The spokesperson for Spain's state weather agency, Rubén del Campo, said the prognosis for the next few weeks was unlikely to improve. "This drought is probably the most intense since the 1960s," he told Spanish radio network Cadena Ser.

"In some areas, such as Catalonia or the east of Andalusia, it is at the level of the worst droughts due to the scarcity of rainfall in the last three years," he said.

The picture is not any rosier in the long-term either, especially for those crops which rely on rainwater.

"There is no plan B," COAG's Fatas said. "While there have been improvements in irrigation systems to make them more efficient, this is becoming a very, very difficult situation for crops that rely on rainwater, like cereals, almonds and our vineyards." □

Sudan's military warns of conflict after rival force deploys

By **JACK JEFFERY**
Associated Press

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP) — Sudan's military warned Thursday of potential clashes with the country's powerful paramilitary force, which it said deployed troops in the capital of Khartoum and other cities. Tensions between the military and the paramilitary, known as Rapid Support Forces or RSF, have escalated in recent months, forcing a delay in the signing of an internationally backed deal with political parties to revive the country's democratic transition. In a statement, the military said the buildup of the RSF in Khartoum and elsewhere in the country was done

without "the approval of, or coordination with" the armed forces' leadership and presents a clear "violation of the law."

The paramilitary has also deployed troops in northern Sudan, along the border with Egypt, with local media reporting that the RSF attempted to build a military base there. Also, videos circulating on social media Thursday show what appear to be RSF-armed vehicles being transported into Khartoum, further to the south.

The latest tensions between the army and the paramilitary stem from a disagreement over how the RSF should be integrated into the military a key condi-

tion of an unsigned transition deal for Sudan. The army-RSF rivalry, however, dates back to the rule of autocratic President Omar al-Bashir, who was ousted in 2019.

Under al-Bashir, the paramilitary force, led by powerful Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, grew out of former militias known as the Janjaweed that executed a brutal crackdown in Sudan's Darfur region during the decades of conflict there.

Although both the army and the RSF together carried out a coup in October 2021 that upended Sudan's transition to democracy, friction between them became increasingly visible

in recent months, with conflicting public statements, heavy military presence in

Khartoum and parallel foreign trips by military and RSF leaders. □



In this frame grab from a video posted by Sudan's state news agency, SUNA on Thursday, April 13, 2023, spokesman for the Sudanese Armed Forces Brig. Nabil Abdullah reads a statement warning of conflict after the recent deployment of Sudan's powerful paramilitary in the capital and other cities.

Associated Press

Young soccer player Fabio Montilla's dreams come true at the Real Madrid Foundation World Challenge Tournament 2023



(Oranjestad)—Since last year, the young soccer player, Fabio Alexander Montilla, was preparing to fly to Madrid, Spain, so he can participate in the Real Madrid Foundation World Challenge Tournament 2023. From March 31st to April 8th of this year, Fabio was at the Real Madrid Sports City to play in this tournament. He sat down with our reporter to share his unforgettable experiences there.

It was last year that Fabio received an invitation from the Real Madrid Foundation to play in their annual tournament after he participated in the soccer trial organized by the foundation and held in Aruba. This was his biggest dream come true.

"I had a great time. The soccer over there is very good, and so was my team, but they were short and the kids over there are pretty tall. They are stronger and since the kids from my team were short, the bigger kids kept pushing them aside. I think if we had played against kids our own size, we would've gotten much farther," he expressed.

Fabio's team placed 4th overall and what was most exciting for him was that he was selected team captain. He shared that they played well and that everyone did their absolute best during the tournament. "We played well; we played with strength, passion, attitude and heart. I defended the best I could and everyone else did their best too," he said.

Fabio normally plays defense and during the tournament, he scored two goals, which made him very happy, especially because he was a defense. He told our reporter that he was also happy because he received great feedback from different people and coaches at the tournament. "Everyone liked how I played. I hope to go there more often."

Claudia Merino, Fabio's mother, flew to Spain with the soccer player and she also told our reporter her experiences during this exciting time for her son. "I thought it to be a beautiful experience for the kids. They got the opportunity to play with kids from all over the world and each one had their own unique style of playing soccer," she indicated.

Merino remarked that it was not easy for the children, seeing as this was something completely new and difficult too, because no one in Fabio's team really knew each other, so they had to adapt quickly to able to play together as a team. Despite the short time they had to train together, she was happy with the results and her son's performance.

"I actually think they'll never forget this experience, because they never imagined to be competing in an international tournament organized by the actual Real Madrid Foundation. I think it's absolutely beautiful and I'm so glad that Fabio got his chance too," she finalized. □



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The countdown to the Aruba International Regatta is on August 26th & 27th 2023



The upcoming Aruba International Regatta, will unfold in several locations on the island of Aruba August 26th & 27th, 2023.

Sailors and guests from Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao are invited, the Blue Highway is open and available, not just for business, but mostly for play. The regatta aspires to bring us out to the beaches, to enjoy a free, physical and fun ac-

tivity, powered by wind.

The Aruba Regatta Foundation reports that the races are just an excuse to get us out of our homes and offices into flipflops and bathing suits. The races are planned in different categories, and locations during two exciting days. Exact race locations will be advised.

The Regatta welcomes re-

gional sailors of all age. You may view the photos from last year's successful meet, on FB, @arubaregatta.

Expected to participate: Mini sailboats, Beachcats, Optimists, Kites, IQ-Foils, Windsurfers, Sunfishes, Lasers and Yachts, all racing right in front of the Oranjestad waterfront in what promises to be a beautiful spectacle.



This year's strategic organization will be handled by two veteran members of Aruba's sailing community, Rik van der Vaart, Anthony Hagedoorn, and a great number of volunteers.

Rik and Anthony see the Regatta as an opportunity to wake up the island to the importance of our harmonious sustainable co-existence with the ocean around us. The regatta sets out to educate all participants about the importance of preservation and

protection of the ocean, in anticipation of the upcoming Aruba Marine Park.

The goal is to attract as many young sailors as possible to the Regatta, instilling love for sailing in the young generation and connecting Aruban and visitors to Nature, in order to grow awareness and encourage care, to safeguard our single most important resource, on which we depend for our livelihood. arubanationalpark.org/main □

Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Divi Village Golf & Beach Resort

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently recognized Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. Presenting the Ambassadors with the Goodwill certification as a token of appreciation.

The honoring certification program is granted to ambassadors, to recognize, the loyalty, friendships, and visits to Aruba. For consecutively choosing Aruba as their preferred vacation destination each year. The Honoring certifica-



tion program has three levels, which are divided according to the number of consecutive years visiting the island of Aruba.

Honoring Levels:

- Distinguished Ambassadors: 10> years
- Goodwill Ambassadors: 20> years
- Emerald Ambassadors: 35> years

Honoree were:

Goodwill Ambassadors 20> years:

John & Kathryn Fogg resident of Missouri, United States (have been visiting Aruba for 23 years consecutively).

Ms. Olga Ruiz representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and members of the Divi Village Golf & Beach Resort bestowed the certification of the Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. The honorees were presented with the official certificate, and with memorable gifts.

On behalf of the Government of Aruba, we



would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to all the Ambassadors for making Aruba their preferred vacation destination for so many years. We are so thankful to have had such wonderful Ambassadors as our visitors after all these years! Aruba is unquestionably their home away from home!

According to Honorees these are the top reasons for returning to Aruba:

Mr. John & Kathryn Fogg reasons:

- The beaches
- Hotel hospitality + friendliness of staff
- Great restaurants
- Ease of driving to places
- Meeting friends, who are lifetime friend. □

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Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently recognized the recognized Distinguished and Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. Presenting the Ambassadors with the official certification as a token of appreciation.

The honoring certification program is granted to ambassadors, to recognize, the loyalty, friendships, and visits to Aruba. For consecutively choosing Aruba as their preferred vacation destination each year.

The Honoring certification program has three levels, which are divided according to the quantity of consecutive years visiting the island.

Honoring Levels:

- Distinguished Ambassadors: 10> years
- Goodwill Ambassadors: 20> years
- Emerald Ambassadors: 35> years

Honorees were:

Distinguished Ambassadors 10> years: **David & Joan Stevens resident of Pottstown**, United States (have been coming to Aruba for 19 years consecutively).

Goodwill Ambassadors 20> years:

James & Stella Borodawka resident of Nebraska, United States (have been coming to Aruba for 32 years consecutively).

Ms. Olga Ruiz representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and members of the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa bestowed the certification of the Ambassadors. The honorees were presented with the Goodwill Certification, and with memorable gifts of Aruba.

On behalf of the Government of Aruba, we would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for making Aruba their preferred vacation destination for so many years. We are so thankful to have had you as our visitors after all these years! Aruba is unquestionably your home away from home!

Top 5 reason for returning to Aruba, provided by the honorees were:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Mr. David & Mrs. Joan Stevens reasons: | Mr. James & Stella Borodawka reasons: |
| Friendly people | Weather |
| Beautiful beaches | Beach |
| Safe environment | Water |
| Shopping | Wind |
| Good food | Food <input type="checkbox"/> |



Beauty & THE BEACH

Aruba Today is delighted to share to its readers a new segment called "Beauty and the Beach", where we take a minute to honor our guests who have decided to spend their vacation on our beautiful and warm island.

In this edition, we'd like to give a shout out **Peter and Cindy Little from Massachusetts, U.S.A.** This is their 20th time visiting Aruba and they feel like the island is a home away from home! Aruba is always proud to host all families and guests. We at Aruba Today encourage any visitor of the island to send in their pictures and/or messages; who knows? You might get on the cover!

This segment is sponsored by Alhambra Casino and Shops.

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Don't forget to visit Aruba's famous Red Anchor

At the south east coast of the island, standing alone on a windswept and barren land stands a popular Aruba landmark – a large anchor. It overlooks the sea just beyond, watching over the shipping lanes. It stands there in memory and in honor of all seamen who have lost their life at sea.

Where to Find the Anchor?

The anchor is a "must see" landmark when you visit Aruba. It is among the most photographed historical landmarks for the island. You want to make sure you add this stop on your itinerary when your visiting the south coast of Aruba. The bright red anchor against the backdrop of the deep blue Caribbean sea and the azure blue skies, make a great backdrop for your vacation pictures.

The anchor is located at the entrance to Gate 6 to the former Lago Colony. It is on the outskirts of Seroe Colorado, on the south east point of the island at the "T" junction to Baby Beach.

Depending on where you are staying on the island, follow the signs that indicate the way to Baby Beach. Once you reach the T-junction, it will be right in front of you.

About the Anchor Size

It will be hard to miss the anchor, it's huge! The anchor that weighs 21,772 kilos, is approximately 10 feet 6 inches wide and 15 feet, 6 inches tall.

On the anchor there are some numbers. The 4112 and 4115, which are believed to be the serial numbers that refer to the "fluke" or hori-

zontal and vertical parts of the anchor, respectively. The number 21772K refers to the weight of the anchor in kilos.

This type of anchor was manufactured by Hoesch Dortmund Horde, at a foundry located in Germany.

Where did the Anchor Come From?

There are a number of stories as to the origins of the anchor, which one do you think it was? (Unfortunately the mystery has never been solved, so your imagination can pick which one you think it might be!)

Story 1:

"According to Mr. Manuel M. Curiel, an ex-Lago Tug Captain, a fully laden VLCC (Very Large Crude Carrier) was seeking a mooring at the 15-mile anchorage, known as Bara, on the southern part of the island. This is the usual shallow mooring location for ships awaiting orders, etc. The weather was rough with strong current. The normal procedure is that they would walk out three shackles (about 90 feet) until the anchor touches the bottom while the chain must rest on the bottom. Subsequently, they will walk out some extra shackles and when the ship starts to swing or lean on one side, the anchor is properly set. Because of the rough weather, unfortunately they did not get the time to walk out the extra tackles and because of the tension exerted on the winch, it broke, and they lost the anchor and its chain."

Story 2:

"Mr. Curiel also said that at one time a small tanker with a Korean crew, while lifting their anchor also lifted another anchor near the

inner harbor. When the ship asked for assistance, he went with his tugboat along with a barge, to help. But eventually they had to cut the chain and let the anchor go to the bottom because they could not untangle them."

How Did The Anchor Become a Landmark?

Sometime between 1980 and 1985, three gentlemen (Mr. Wim Martinus – the Harbor-master of Aruba; Mr. August Genser – the ex-Division Superintendent of Lago's Laboratory; and Mr. Willie Davis – Owner of Filtec at Zee-wijk in San Nicolas), were having a conversation with Mr. Charlie Brouns Jr. at his famous Charlie's Bar and Restaurant in San Nicolas. Charlie, who was a visionary and had dreams for developing the San Nicolas area, told these gentlemen that he would like to come up with something innovative for the San Nicolas area to draw tourism to the area.

The "anchor", which at that time was being stored at the Oranjestad harbor, was suggested as an option. Charlie liked the idea! He then contacted the President of Lago for permission to acquire the anchor. He was granted permission and the anchor was then relocated to its present location and dedicated "To All Seamen" on the occasion of the closing of the Lago Oil Refinery on March 31, 1985.

Through the Years

Through the years the Anchor was slowly weathering from the wind and salt. As time passed, sadly the origin and purpose of the anchor slowly faded away from people's memories.

After Charles Brouns Jr died on September 15, 2004, his friend Mr. Sam Speziale, requested assistance from the management of Valero Aruba Refinery to help maintain the monument. The Valero Aruba Refinery, graciously sandblasted and painted the anchor and poured a concrete pad around it. On April 17, 2005, the anchor monument was rededicated "To All Seamen" in a formal ceremony in memory of Charles Brouns Jr.

Today, the anchor stands both as memorial to all seaman who have lost their lives at sea, but also as a silent reminder that Seroe Colorado is part of San Nicolas and that San Nicolas is still a vibrant and important part of the island of Aruba.

The Best Time to Visit

When your planning your visit to the south end of the island, you will want to include in your itinerary the many things to see and do there. The anchor will be just one of these stops, (keep an eye out for our future editions, we publish our recommendations!).

With that being said, I have to say, if you enjoy catching a sunrise, the anchor is one of the best places on the island to catch the sunrise. But in reality, anytime is a good time to visit, depending on your personal schedule. ☐



Imelda Geerman-Willems: 18 years of bringing joy to children

(Oranjestad)—For 18 long years now, Imelda Geerman-Willems have brought joy to the children of Aruba with her puppets, and in recent years, with her magnificent puppet shows. In an interview with our reporter, Imelda shares her journey that has led her into the world of child entertainment and puppetry.

Imelda has been a government worker for 30 years. She told our reporter that she comes from a family of 8 children; 5 girls, 3 boys. She is the youngest of the bunch. She's been married to Patrick Geerman for 22 years and they have one teenage son who is now 19 years old.

Imelda worked at Party Animals for 8 and a half years, but after her mother passed away, she decided to stop working at children's parties. "My mother's passing left a hole in my heart. Not long after that, I lost my father as well. It was a really rough time," she expressed.

A couple months after quitting Party Animals, she started to miss the joy of making children happy. After talking to her husband about how she felt, he started to prepare a surprise for her. "When I saw materials start to come in the house, he



surprised me with a number from the Chamber of Commerce with the name 'EZ party solutions' on it. It's been 18 years since that surprise, and it was one of the best things that has happened to me. I was able to go back to making children happy," she shared.

The first show from EZ Party Solutions included Tio George and Tanchi Esmee (Uncle George and Aunt Esmee). Imelda explained that at that time, she had never visited Disney Land, but was really hoping to go

one day. This gave her the idea to give children that may not have the luxury to go to Disney Land, to enjoy the same type of characters that you see there.

The first costume that Imelda got was a Hello Kitty costume for a friend's party. After that, they met with a group preparing their set for the Carnival Queen show, with their theme being Sesame Street. Imelda and her husband immediately offered to provide costumes for the show—which ultimately won for best show that year.

After working on two shows with Tio George and Tanchi Esmee, Imelda shared that she did something beyond her comfort zone: she produced her own show named "Masha and the Bear." This show sold out 6 times over before it even premiered.

This year, she organized the show called "Encanto and Friends." She explained that after she saw the movie Encanto, she was inspired to make this show, along with the beloved character Sonic. After 4 full houses, EZ Party Solutions, along with dance group Kids & Youth

in Action, received an invitation to perform in Curacao.

"This was my dream come true, thanks to the EZ crew, my family—and last but not least, my promoter, Corine. We were able to represent Aruba and have left a beautiful mark. In Curacao, we were able to sell out the show and perform for 1500 people in the audience. From the moment the first song played, you could hear the children's excitement. It really warmed our hearts and made us less nervous. It was a beautiful experience. It does take a lot of work, but it's always worth it for the kids. A big thanks goes to Miss Debra for joining the show," she expressed.

For what's in store this year, Imelda assures that there is a great show coming soon, but that she couldn't give away too much yet.

Lastly, Imelda extends her gratitude to everyone that has helped her dreams of bringing joy to children come true. "Once again, I want to thank God for giving me the energy and the motivation to do what I do, to my family for their support and patience, and to my crew who has always gone all out to make things happen." □



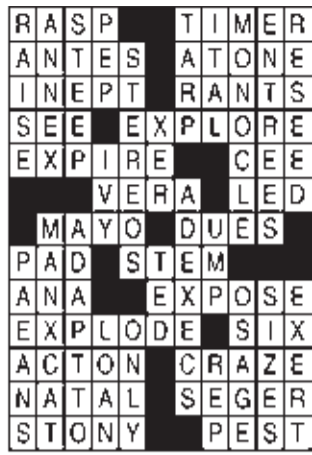
CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

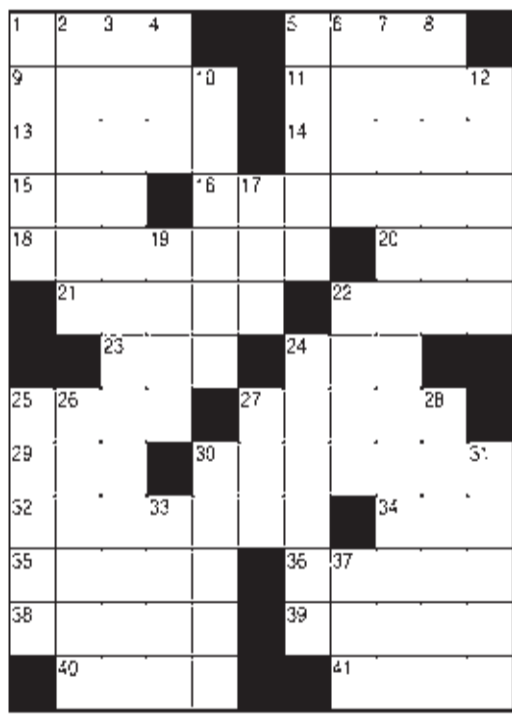
- ACROSS**
- 38 Play part
 - 1 Church offshoot
 - 5 Vegas game
 - 9 License
 - 11 Site of action
 - 13 Davis of "Thelma & Louise"
 - 14 Floor squares
 - 15 Longoria of TV
 - 16 Like Ingrid Bergman
 - 18 Law-making bodies
 - 20 Wide shoe marking
 - 21 Some Picassos
 - 22 Cpl.'s subordinates
 - 23 Knee protector
 - 24 GPS screen
 - 25 Needing aspirin
 - 27 Amber source
 - 29 Greek X
 - 30 Fortify
 - 32 Daily grind
 - 34 Busy one in Apr.
 - 35 Door sign
 - 36 Patriot Allen

DOWN

- 1 Wise ones
- 2 Late hour
- 3 Fourth in the lineup
- 4 Great weight
- 5 Trio of myth
- 6 Parched
- 7 Ace's replacement
- 8 "Just a moment"
- 10 Frittered away
- 12 Arson yield
- 17 Director Anderson
- 19 Call it —
- 22 Go by
- 24 Brawls
- 25 Farm units
- 26 Probability
- 27 Bird of myth
- 28 Kathmandu native
- 30 Uncovers
- 31 Talks crazily
- 33 Nevada city
- 37 "I don't need the details." for short



Yesterday's answer



A X Y D I B A A X R
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's. X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

4-14

CRYPTOQUOTE

K M F Q S H O U U K U N X Q U L E U
M V R K B H A E I H J V M S
Y Q M W U P L H V A F H N E U O
R M V N L U B B X L H M V N. — C X I B M
V U Q F O X

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: WHOEVER IS HAPPY WILL MAKE OTHERS HAPPY TOO. — ANNE FRANK

Haven't filed taxes yet? Don't panic. Here's what to know

By ADRIANA MORGA
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The deadline to file your taxes is Tuesday, which is just around the corner. Filing U.S. tax returns especially for the first time can seem like a daunting task, but there are steps you can take to make it less stressful.

Whether you do your taxes yourself, go to a tax clinic or hire a professional, navigating the tax system can be complicated and stressful. Courtney Alev, a consumer financial advocate for Credit Karma, recommends you go easy on yourself.

"Take a breath. Take some time, set out an hour, or go through it over the weekend. You'll hopefully see that it's a lot simpler than you think," Alev said.

If you find the process too confusing, there are plenty of free resources to help you get through it.

If you are worried that you might not have enough time to file your taxes before the deadline, you can file for an extension, though it's not ideal (more on that below.)

Here's what you need to know:

WHEN IS THE DEADLINE TO FILE TAXES?

Taxpayers have until Tuesday to submit their returns from 2022.

WHAT DO I NEED TO FILE MY TAX RETURN?

While the required documents might depend on your individual case, here is a general list of what everyone needs:

- Social Security number
- W-2 forms, if you are em-



The likeness of Benjamin Franklin is seen on a U.S. \$100 bill, Wednesday, Feb. 22, 2023, in Marple Township, Pa.
Associated Press

ployed 1099-G, if you are unemployed 1099 forms, if you are self-employed Savings and investment records

Any eligible deduction, such as educational expenses, medical bills, charitable donations, etc.

Tax credits, such as child tax credit, retirement savings contributions credit, etc.

To find a more detailed document list, visit the IRS website.

Tom O'Saben, director of tax content and government relations at the National Association of Tax Professionals, recommends gathering all of your documents in one place before you start your tax return and also having your documents from last year if your financial situation has drastically changed.

Theresa Grover, site coordinator for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, also recommends taxpay-

ers create an identity protection PIN number with the IRS to guard against identity theft. Once you create a number, the IRS will require it to file your tax return.

HOW DO I FILE MY TAXES?

You can either file your taxes online or on paper. However, there is a big time difference between the two options. Paper filing can take up to six months for the IRS to process, while electronic filing cuts it down to three weeks.

WHAT RESOURCES ARE OUT THERE?

For those who make \$73,000 or less per year, the IRS offers free guided tax preparation that does the math for you. If you have questions while working on your tax forms, the IRS also offers an interactive tax assistant tool that can provide answers based on your information.

Beyond the popular companies such as TurboTax and H&R Block, taxpayers can also hire licensed professionals, such as certified public accountants. The IRS offers a directory of tax preparers across the United States. The IRS also funds two types of programs that offer free tax help: VITA and the Tax Counseling for the Elderly program (TCE). People who earn \$60,000 or less a year, have disabilities or are limited English speakers, qualify for the VITA program. □

New streaming app to 'Max' programming from HBO, Discovery

By **MICHAEL LIEDTKE**
AP Technology Writer

Warner Bros. Discovery unveiled a streaming service Wednesday combining iconic HBO programming such as "The Sopranos" with a mix of unscripted TV series in a push to reap more subscribers from what so far has been a muddled media merger. The \$16-per-month service, called Max, will be released May 23 in the U.S. and automatically replace the company's existing HBO Max service in what is being promised as a seamless transition. Max will gradually become available in the rest of the world, with Latin America next up on the slate. The existing Discovery Plus app featuring reality and unscripted series such as "Fixer Upper" and "Naked and Afraid" from a collection of TV networks will continue to be offered. That's even as all that programming is made available within the new Max app, which will be marketed with the tagline "The One To Watch."

The transition comes a year after the completion of a roughly \$43 billion deal that spun off the AT&T's WarnerMedia Division that includes HBO, CNN and TBS into Discovery, whose

stable includes the TLC, HGTV, Magnolia and Food networks. When the deal was announced in 2021, Warner Bros. Discover CEO David Zaslav envisioned it creating "the best media company in the world" backed by a vast library of movies, TV series, documentaries and children's programming. □

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Makers of 'Elemental' explore family, tolerance and movement

By **BERENICE BAUTISTA**

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — "Elemental" director Peter Sohn says his parents ignited the spark for the upcoming Disney and Pixar animated film.

Sohn invited his parents who both had emigrated from Korea to the U.S. to an event. Seeing them from the stage filled him with a deep appreciation for all they had done for their family.

"I saw them, and I was very emotional thanking them for all the sacrifices," Sohn said in a recent video call interview for "Elemental," a film about a family of fire elements who migrate to Element City, a place where there are also inhabitants of water, air and earth. The themes of family, tolerance and building connections run throughout the film debuting this summer.

The film centers on Ember, a fire element who loves working at her father's store but has trouble controlling her explosive temper, especially around uncomfortable customers. Ember's life in Firetown, a suburb with many inhabitants of fire, is turned upside down when, due to a plumbing accident, she meets Wade, a water element and inspector who lives in Element City. Ember and Wade get



This image released by Disney/Pixar Studios shows Ember, voiced by Leah Lewis, in a scene from the animated film "Elemental."

to know each other, and she enjoys being outside Firetown. They realize their differences and elements are not an impediment for friendship.

The production team faced a challenge in bringing the characters to life.

"We have been doing all sorts of different characters, from toys to cars... And that was another challenge," said Spanish animator Jordi Onate. "We had to break all the rules that we knew from body mechanics... We did a lot of research on how the water behaves and how the fire behaves in certain situations and, on top of that, trying to make them talk."

But the fact that they are elements also gave animators the ability to give the characters particular powers. For example, Ember's a girl of fire. She can use that fire to remake broken glass and weld metal.

"This is one of the most complex projects I think we've worked on at Pixar, just because of that; we are used to animating humans or animals, and you have references for that, but in this case, we were trying to figure out how a character made of fire or water would move," said Colombian animator Luis Uribe Córdoba.

"We had like three or four weeks just to test out stuff

and watch videos of slow-motion fire or water behavior."

Development of the project began seven years ago. Mexican artist Paula Assadourian was one of the first to help Sohn find the essence of the characters and story. Assadourian, who began working on the film in 2019, was in charge of making the story board before production.

"I think "Elemental" is a very special film because it's about Ember kind of coming to face (with) who she is and what she wants to do; if she wants to pursue her path or if she wants to kind of stay close to her roots and her family and

what people expect her to be," said Assadourian. "Wade changes Ember, or he kind of awakens her to say, 'there's so much more you can do with your life.'" Sohn, who in addition to being a director is an animator, voice actor and artist, previously directed "The Good Dinosaur" and has collaborated on multiple Pixar films such as "Incredibles 2," "Ratatouille," "Finding Nemo," "Up," "Toy Story 3" and "WALL E." But "Elemental" is the most personal story in which he has been involved.

The film shows that tolerance and empathy can combat evils such as xenophobia. Sohn says the "idea of xenophobia" was a part of "Elemental" from the start.

"The idea of xenophobia was always in the story from the beginning (before the pandemic)," he said. "Because my father and mother experienced the same xenophobia, it wasn't a new thing...(But) the idea of Asian hate that started happening in such bold-face manners was really terrifying. I remember my mom calling me and saying don't go out into San Francisco. She was terrified, and she had never been terrified to that level when we were growing up; it was a real fear." □

Associated Press

Posthumous Kenny Rogers album will feature unreleased songs

The Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)

— Previously unreleased songs recorded by the late country superstar Kenny Rogers will be on a new record coming out in June. After a career spanning jazz, rock, country and pop, the Grammy-winning balladeer nicknamed "The Gambler" died at the age of 81 in 2020. His widow, Wanda Rogers, curated the posthumous record called "Life is Like a Song," coming out June 2 on UMe. The recordings were made between 2008 and 2011 and includes originals and

covers like Eric Clapton's "Wonderful Tonight" and "At Last," made famous by Etta James, which will be on a deluxe version of the record.

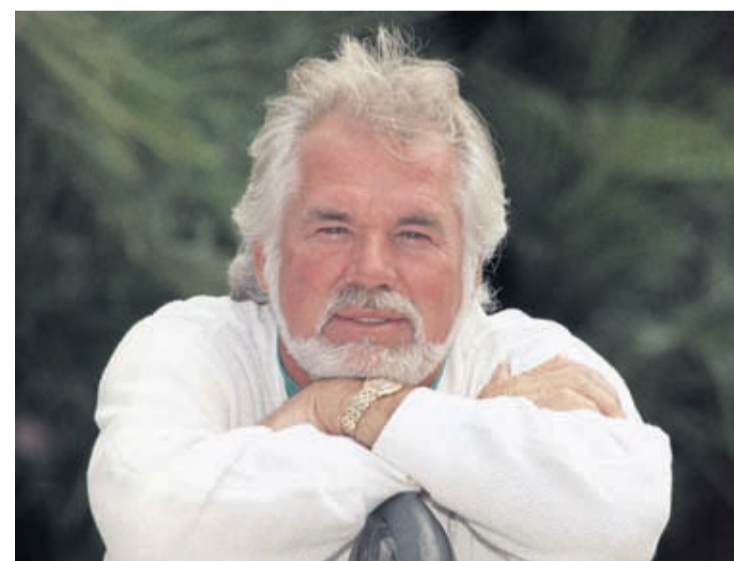
The album will also include two previously released songs, his duet with Dolly Parton, "Tell Me That You Love Me," and "Goodbye," written by Lionel Richie, both released in 2009, but never digitally.

The Country Music Hall of Famer had a thriving career for some 60 years with such hits as "Lucille," "Lady" and "Islands in the Stream," a beloved Parton-

Rogers duet.

"He would often say that he wanted his songs to be 'what every man wants to say, and every woman wants to hear,'" Wanda Rogers said in a press release.

"I think there are a lot of those moments on this album. This is a very special record to me and our family because it really tells the story of our life together, and I feel his fans will also relate to it in a big way because it walks the listener through the seasons of life that we all experience in one way or another." □



Kenny Rogers poses for a portrait in Los Angeles, May 17, 1989. **Associated Press**

Breakaway group aims to save boxing's Olympic status

LONDON (AP) — American and British boxing officials are among the leaders of a breakaway group launched Thursday with the aim of saving boxing's place at the Olympics. The new federation, to be called World Boxing, is a rival to the 77-year-old International Boxing Association, which has been suspended from organizing the sport at the Olympics amid longstanding concerns about fair judging and the IBA's ties to Russia. "Amateur, Olympic-style boxing was facing elimination from the Olympic Games," said USA Boxing president Tyson Lee, who is on the interim board of the new organization. "I can speak for the United States and many other national federations. We have a vested interest in maintaining a pathway to the Olympic movement and somewhere along the line that turned out to not be a priority for IBA." World Boxing will be based in Switzerland and have a board consisting of athletes and officials, including Lee and GB Boxing chief



Richard Torrez Jr., from the United States, left, exchanges punches with Cuba's Dainier Pero during their men's super heavyweight over 91-kg boxing match at the 2020 Summer Olympics, Aug. 1, 2021, in Tokyo, Japan.

executive Matthew Holt. Lauren Price of Britain, a gold medalist at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, and silver medalist Richard Torrez Jr. of the United States are on the board as athlete representatives. Elections for a president and a new board are planned for November.

"This is about the future of the sport," Holt said. "Our status on the Olympic program is on life support and we, as an organization, need to breathe new life into it. We want to operate in the best interests of the boxers." A standoff between the IBA and the International Olym-

pic Committee meant boxing was left off the initial program for the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles. Boxing is part of next year's Paris Olympics, but it will be organized by the IOC. The IOC suspended the IBA in 2019 after years of concerns about its finances, governance and claims

that fights at the 2016 Olympics were manipulated. Current IBA president Umar Kremlev took over in 2020, bringing financial backing from Russian state gas company Gazprom. The IOC wants Russians to compete as neutral athletes in Olympic sports following the invasion of Ukraine, but Kremlev's IBA has allowed them to fight at the world championships with national flags and anthems, drawing another rebuke from the IOC. The United States and Britain were among more than 10 countries that announced boycotts of the recent women's world championships and upcoming men's world championships because of Russia's position and wider concerns about the IBA. Kremlev said officials who backed a boycott were "worse than hyenas and jackals." World Boxing interim secretary general Simon Toulson said the new organization was operating with a budget of 900,000 euros (\$994,000) this year, without naming any specific funding sources. □

Associated Press

Rays tie record with 13-0 start, rally to beat Red Sox 9-3

By **DICK SCANLON**
Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — The Tampa Bay Rays tied Major League Baseball's post-1900 record for 13 consecutive wins at a season's start, rallying to beat the Boston Red Sox 9-3 Thursday behind a seven-run fifth inning that Harold Ramirez began and capped with doubles. Tampa Bay matched the 13-0 start of the 1982 Atlanta Braves and 1987 Milwaukee Brewers. The only longer opening streak was a 20-0 start by the 1884 St. Louis Maroons of the Union Association. The Rays have won all but two of the games by four or more runs and have outscored opponents 101-30 with the most

runs in the big leagues and the fewest allowed. Playing before a crowd of 21,175, the largest at Tropicana Field since opening day, the Rays set a team record for wins at any point in a season by topping a 12-game run in June 2004. Boston, held to four hits, has lost 13 consecutive games at the Trop. Rays starter Jeffrey Springs left two pitches into the fourth inning with what the team said was ulnar neuritis, inflammation of the ulnar nerve that causes numbness or weakness. He was relieved after throwing a 79.8 mph changeup and a 83.5 mph to Justin Turner, then looking at his hand and elbow. Tampa Bay trailed 3-1 in

the fifth. Ramirez started the big rally with a double off Corey Kluber (0-3) and broke open the game with a three-run double against Richard Bleier. Francisco Mejia cut the deficit with a run-scoring single and Brandon Lowe greeted Bleier, the only left-hander in Boston's bullpen, with a tying RBI single. Randy Arozarena singled for a 4-3 lead, Wander Franco was hit by a pitch and Manuel Margot dropped down a run-scoring bunt single. Ramirez then lined a double into the left-field corner for an 8-3 advantage. Lowe added a seventh-inning home run off Kutter Crawford, his fifth this season. Yandy Diaz tied the



Tampa Bay Rays' Brandon Lowe (8) and Yandy Diaz (2) celebrate a solo home run in the first inning of a baseball game against the Boston Red Sox at Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg, Fla., Thursday, April 13, 2023.

Associated Press

score 1-1 in the first with his fourth this season for the Rays, who lead the major leagues with 32. Kevin Kelly (1-0), a 25-year-old right-hander who debuted April 1, pitched 2 2/3 innings for the win. Braden Bristo, a 28-year-old right-hander, pitched three

hitless innings with four strikeouts and a walk in his major league debut after seven seasons in the New York Yankees minor league system. Rob Refsnyder homered in the first, the first run off Springs in three starts this season. □

AP source: Dan Snyder agrees to \$6B sale of NFL's Commanders

By **ROB MAADDI** and **STEPHEN WHYNO**
AP Sports Writers

A group led by Josh Harris and Mitchell Rales that includes Magic Johnson has an agreement in principle to buy the NFL's Washington Commanders from longtime owner Dan Snyder for a North American professional sports team record \$6 billion, according to a person with knowledge of the situation.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Thursday because the deal hasn't been finalized.

Another person told the AP a deal hasn't been sent to the league for approval yet.

A Commanders spokesperson said the team was not in position to comment. The league declined to comment.

Once the deal is approved, Harris would own controlling stakes in teams in three of the four major North American pro sports leagues. He and David Blitzer have owned the NBA's Philadelphia 76ers since 2011 and the NHL's New Jersey Devils since 2013.

Harris has owned a piece of the Pittsburgh Steelers, which he needs to sell



Washington Commanders' Dan Snyder poses for photos during an event to unveil the NFL football team's new identity, Feb. 2, 2022, in Landover, Md.

Associated Press

before getting the Commanders.

The news was first reported by Sportico.

This price for the Commanders shatters what Harris and Blitzer paid for those organizations and tops the previous record of \$4.65 billion set when Walmart heir Rob Walton's group bought the Denver Broncos last year. Johnson, the basketball Hall of Famer who also owns part of Major League Baseball's Los

Angeles Dodgers, was also part of Harris' bid for the Broncos.

Rales, co-founder of the Danaher Corporation and a Maryland resident, and Johnson were relatively late additions to the group. Rales and Harris grew up in Bethesda in the Washington suburbs and give the team local ownership roots. The sale of the Commanders is pending the execution of a contract and then approval from the rest of

the league's owners, which could happen as soon as their next meeting in Minnesota in May but may take longer. It would need 24 of 32 votes to pass, which is not expected to be a problem after the Broncos sale was unanimously approved and given Snyder was beginning to fall out of favor with the group.

Snyder bought his boyhood team in 1999 for \$750 million and despite mounting criticism repeatedly said he'd

never sell. That changed after multiple investigations by the league and U.S. Congress into Washington's workplace misconduct and potential improprieties. The congressional investigation found Snyder played a role in a toxic culture.

Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay in October became the first to suggest there was "merit to remove" Snyder, a nearly unprecedented move that would have also taken a three-quarters majority to happen. Instead, two weeks later, Snyder and wife Tanya hired Bank of America Securities to explore a possible sale of the team.

It quickly became apparent the Snyders, who bought out the previous minority owners in 2021, were not looking for new investors to buy in and maintain controlling interest. Canadian investor Steve Apostolopoulos and Houston Rockets owner Tilman Fertitta were among the other bidders after early interest from D.C.-area businessman Todd Boehly and mortgage executive Mat Ishbia, who instead paid \$4 billion to buy the NBA's Phoenix Suns and WNBA's Mercury. □

First QB helmet designed to help reduce concussions approved

By **ROB MAADDI**
AP Pro Football Writer

The first quarterback-specific helmet designed to help reduce concussions has been approved for use by the NFL and NFLPA, the AP has learned.

The helmet, manufactured by Vicis, reduces severity of helmet-to-ground impacts, which league data says account for approximately half of quarterback concussions, including the one suffered by Miami's Tua Tagovailoa last season when his head slammed violently against the turf during a Thursday night game against Cincinnati.

"We've now analyzed with our engineers and with the Players Association more

than a 1,000 concussions on field, we have a pretty good database of how these injuries occur," NFL executive Jeff Miller told the AP about the helmet-to-ground impacts. "This helmet performs better in laboratory testing than any helmets we have ever seen for those sorts of impacts." The helmet performed 7% better than the most popular helmet worn by quarterbacks last season, the league said in a memo sent to team executives on Thursday.

Jason Neubauer, an executive for Vicis, said the company began designing its Zero2 Matrix QB helmet in early 2022.

"The unique thing is that it

has a deformed outer shell, which means when you take an impact in any location on that helmet, it will deform or basically dent in that location to absorb the impact," Neubauer said. "What that means for us, as designers or engineers, as we're looking to optimize it for different types of impacts, we're able to change unique locations to try to optimize the impact mitigation in any one area."

It's unknown how many quarterbacks will switch to the new QB-specific helmet. The league and the players' union share information from the helmet studies with teams so players make informed deci-

sions on helmet choice. The only other position-specific helmet already approved is the Vicis Zero2-R Trench for offensive and defensive

linemen.

The memo sent to teams also includes the results of the 2023 helmet laboratory testing study. □



Miami Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa looks to pass during the first half of an NFL football game against the Green Bay Packers, Sunday, Dec. 25, 2022, in Miami Gardens, Fla.

Associated Press